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**Statistical Commission**
**Forty-ninth session**
6–9 March 2018
Item 2 of the provisional agenda
**Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters**

# Provisional agenda and annotations

## Provisional agenda

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## Annotations

### 1. Election of officers

In accordance with rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and past practices, the Statistical Commission, at the commencement of its first meeting of a regular session, elects, from among the representatives of its members, a Bureau comprising a Chair, three Vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur.

The Bureau is elected on the basis of the principle of equitable geographical distribution, with one member of the Bureau elected from each of the regions represented on the Commission. The Bureau serves for two years, to the extent possible. That duration is achieved by electing the Bureau for a period of one year and re-electing the members of the Bureau who continue to be representatives to the Commission at the following session.

### 2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

The items on the provisional agenda and the corresponding documentation were proposed by the Commission at its forty-eighth session (New York, 7–10 March 2017) and were adopted by the Council in its decision 2017/228. The Bureau has subsequently approved some changes. The proposed provisional programme of work and timetable for the session is also before the Commission. The Commission is invited to adopt the agenda and the provisional programme of work and timetable for its forty-ninth session.

**Documentation**

Provisional agenda and annotations (E/CN.3/2018/1)

Note by the Secretariat on the provisional programme of work and timetable for the session (E/CN.3/2018/L.1)

## 3. Items for discussion and decision

### (a) Data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The Commission will have before it the report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators on the ongoing work of implementing a global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including: (a) guidelines and best practices on data flows and global data reporting for the Sustainable Development Goals; (b) updates to the tier classification of the global indicator framework; (c) annual refinements of some indicators in the global indicator framework; (d) development of tier III indicators; and (e) work carried out on the data disaggregation work stream and by the working groups on interlinkages, the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange and geospatial information, respectively. The Commission will also have before it the background documents on the guidelines and best practices on data flows and global data reporting for the Sustainable Development Goals and on the work on data disaggregation and by the respective working groups.

Points for decision by the Commission include: (a) the work on the guidelines and best practices on data flows and global data reporting for Sustainable Development Goals; (b) annual refinements of some indicators in the global indicator framework; and (c) the programme of work of the Group for the following year.

The Commission will also have before it the report of the Secretary-General on the work carried out by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, in cooperation with other entities of the United Nations system, in support of the 2030 Agenda. The report details the preparation of the annual report of the Secretary-General on the Sustainable Development Goals (E/2017/66), as mandated by the General Assembly (see resolution 70/1, para. 83), as well as the work undertaken to update the database on the global indicators, including a data and metadata repository, and to support countries in the implementation of the indicators at the national level. In addition, the report sets out the outcomes of a conference on national reporting platforms, the research exercise on the piloting of a federated system of national and global data hubs and the establishment of a global network of institutions for statistical training. The Commission is invited to take note of the work carried out by the Statistics Division in cooperation with the United Nations system and to comment on the outcomes of the said conference, research exercise and establishment of such a global network and its proposed programme of work.

The Commission will also have before it the report of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The report provides a summary of the recent activities of the High-level Group related to the implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data, the work on statistical capacity needs by the joint subgroup of the High-level Group and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, preparations for the second United Nations World Data Forum, to be held from 22 to 24 October 2018 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and recommendations regarding establishing the position of Chief Statistician of the United Nations.

Points for decision by the Commission include: (a) reviewing and expressing its views on the creation of the position of Chief Statistician of the United Nations; (b) approval of the proposed revision to the terms of reference of the joint subgroup, as contained in annex III to the report of the High-level Group; (c) expressing its views on the mechanism for contribution of the Commission to the high-level political forum on sustainable development; and (d) expressing its views on and approval of the proposed workplan of the High-level Group for 2018.

**Documentation**

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (E/CN.3/2018/2)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work on the review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (E/CN.3/2018/3)

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (E/CN.3/2018/4)

### (b) Handbook of Statistical Organization

The Commission will have before it the report of the Secretary-General on the revision of the Handbook of Statistical Organization. In the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data and the final report of the series of conferences on a transformative agenda for official statistics, the need for statistical organizations to adapt and develop was stressed. The 2030 Agenda demands high-quality, timely and disaggregated statistics to respond to new data needs and emerging challenges. The report includes a commented outline for the fourth edition of the Handbook of Statistical Organization that considers the strategic development areas proposed by these initiatives, based on consultations with chief statisticians and senior managers of statistical organizations. The Commission is invited to comment on the proposed content and structure of the fourth edition of the Handbook.

**Documentation**

Report of the Secretary-General on the Handbook of Statistical Organization (E/CN.3/2018/5)

### (c) Open data

The Commission will have before it a report of the Secretary-General on the initial work undertaken on open data for the Sustainable Development Goals, including the outcomes of the international seminar on open data for the Sustainable Development Goals, held in the Republic of Korea in September 2017, and initiatives at the country level on open data platforms. The report highlights ideas and proposed open data principles for national statistical offices. The Commission is invited to review the proposed principles and discuss the way forward.

**Documentation**

Report of the Secretary-General on open data (E/CN.3/2018/6)

### (d) Household surveys

The Commission will have before it the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys. The report provides a summary of the recent activities undertaken by the Intersecretariat Working Group. The report also presents: (a) an analysis of mapping of Sustainable Development Goal indicators and household

surveys; and (b) the status of work of three task forces established under the Group. Furthermore, the report details the ongoing work and priorities for future activities to be undertaken by the Group and proposals for the way forward. The Commission is invited to review the proposed priorities for future work and the proposal for the way forward.

**Documentation**

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Household Surveys (E/CN.3/2018/7)

**(e) Big data for official statistics**

The Commission will have before it the report of the Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics. As requested, the Global Working Group provides in its report the business case for a global platform for data, services and applications with proofs of concept. It describes global data collaboratives with technology companies, data providers and academia, giving due attention to the formulation of standards and guidelines for data governance and information management, addressing issues of trust, privacy, confidentiality and security of data. These global data collaboratives address the need to exchange ideas and methods for processing, analysing and visualizing big data among official statisticians, data scientists and domain experts from the public and private sectors; to store, share and exchange big data, related processing, analytical and visualization methodologies, and services and applications for continuous development and reuse; and to share resources for training materials and workshops on big data for official statistics. The Global Working Group also reports on several training workshops that it has developed on the use of satellite data for crop statistics, mobile phone data for tourism statistics, social media data for sentiment analysis and scanner data for price statistics. The Commission is invited to comment on the proposal for global data collaboratives facilitated by a global platform for data, services and applications.

**Documentation**

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics (E/CN.3/2018/8)

**(f) Regional statistical development**

The Commission will have before it the report of the Economic Commission for Africa on regional statistical development in Africa. The report highlights activities being undertaken in Africa on statistical development, including the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa, and methodological work in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union. Key areas of focus for statistical development are presented and include national accounts, environmental statistics and accounting, civil registrations and vital statistics, gender statistics and other initiatives such as open data and data revolution. The Commission is invited to comment on strategic initiatives and actions undertaken in the African region, which are aimed at boosting statistical development in the continent. The Commission is also invited to consider calling upon development partners to scale up their support for statistical development initiatives in Africa.

**Documentation**

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Economic Commission for Africa on regional statistical development in Africa (E/CN.3/2018/9)

**(g) National accounts**

The Commission will have before it the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts. On the occasion of the 10-year anniversary of the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA), the Working Group, in its report, takes stock of the work done so far and reflects on the challenges and opportunities still ahead. In this respect, the report provides information on issues emerging from the implementation of SNA, in particular the outcome of the meeting of the Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts, progress with the research agenda on practical issues of implementation of the 2008 SNA and an update on the finalization of publications supporting the implementation of the 2008 SNA. It also contains the programme of work of the Working Group and of the regional commissions, an update on the scope and timeliness of the implementation of SNA at the country level and an update on the international coordination of regional and global data collection and data exchange activities. The Commission is invited to express its views and provide guidance on the elements of the programme of work of the Working Group.

**Documentation**

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (E/CN.3/2018/10)

**(h) Environmental-economic accounting**

The Commission will have before it the report of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting. In its report, the Committee of Experts reports the progress made in advancing the following areas of work: (a) coordination; (b) methodological development for normative statistical standards and other research, consisting of (i) the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) Central Framework and (ii) SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting; (c) development of databases; (d) implementation and statistical capacity-building; and (e) formulation of a statistical response to emerging policy issues, consisting of (i) communication and (ii) SEEA and the Sustainable Development Goal indicators. The Committee of Experts presents the revision process of SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting, including the financing of the project, the results of the global assessment and progress made in the implementation of SEEA, a proposal for the development of global databases compliant with SEEA, and the communication strategy. The Commission is invited to provide its views on the progress of work of the Committee and its programme of work.

**Documentation**

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (E/CN.3/2018/11)

**(i) Statistics for economies based on natural resources**

The Commission will have before it the report of the Ulaanbaatar Group on Statistics for Economies Based on Natural Resources. The report provides a summary of the recent operations of the Ulaanbaatar Group and information on the Group's programme of work. The Ulaanbaatar Group will also provide, in a background document, a draft of the handbook that it has prepared on statistics for economies based on natural resources. The Commission is invited to comment on the draft handbook.

**Documentation**

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Ulaanbaatar Group on Statistics for Economies based on Natural Resources (E/CN.3/2018/12)

**(j) Agricultural and rural statistics**

The Commission will have before it a report on new methodological developments in food, agricultural and rural statistics covering: (a) the report of the Global Strategy Steering Committee, presenting the key activities undertaken to implement the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics and the plans for preparing a second phase of implementation beyond 2018; (b) the report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Agricultural and Rural Statistics, containing a summary of the work undertaken to date and presenting the new proposed guidelines on measuring food consumption and expenditures in household consumption and expenditure surveys; and (c) the report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), introducing the second volume of the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2020, covering the period 2016–2025. The Commission is invited to comment on the described methodological developments and to provide further guidance to the Steering Committee, to the Inter-Agency and Expert Group and to FAO on the implementation of global efforts to strengthen the capacity of national agricultural statistical systems.

**Documentation**

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on agricultural and rural statistics (E/CN.3/2018/13)

**(k) Climate change statistics**

The Commission will have before it the report of the Secretary-General on climate change statistics. The report was prepared by the Statistics Division in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The report contains an update of the work of the Statistics Division in climate change statistics, in particular with regard to the development of a global set of climate change statistics and indicators. The report includes a workplan prepared by the Division outlining the way forward. It details the progress made in ECE work on climate change-related statistics and indicators, as well as the current work and future plans of the Convention secretariat on the policy and statistics interface. In this regard, ways to strengthen the relationship between these institutions and better engage the wider statistical community are also explored in the report. The Commission is invited to express its views on the report and discuss the way forward.

**Documentation**

Report of the Secretary-General on climate change statistics (E/CN.3/2018/14)

**(l) Statistical classifications**

The Commission will have before it the report of the Expert Group on International Statistical Classifications. The report provides updated information on work related to the development and implementation of international statistical classifications in various fields. In particular, the report presents the outcome of the work on revising the Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose. The report also

details the work carried out by the Expert Group on the coordination of classifications work and the international family of statistical classifications.

The Commission is requested to comment on the issues described in this report and to endorse the revised version of the Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose.

**Documentation**

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Expert Group on International Statistical Classifications (E/CN.3/2018/15)

**(m) Refugee statistics**

The Commission will have before it the report on refugee statistics prepared by the Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics. In its report, the Group highlights the work leading to the development of the international recommendations on refugee statistics and a technical report on internally displaced persons, including the organization of global meetings in Copenhagen, Oslo and Geneva and a global consultation on the draft recommendations to solicit comments widely prior to submission to the Commission.

The Commission will also have before it two background documents of the Expert Group: the international recommendations on refugee statistics and a technical report on internally displaced persons. While there are many parallels between refugees and internally displaced persons and the statistical challenges in measuring and reporting on these populations are often similar, they do have different statuses; hence, statistics on refugees and internally displaced persons are considered and presented in two different documents.

The Commission is invited to adopt the refugee recommendations and support the technical report on internally displaced persons. The Commission is also invited to provide guidance on the next phase of the work of the Expert Group, namely the development of a refugee statistics compilers manual and more concrete recommendations with regard to statistics on internally displaced persons.

**Documentation**

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics (E/CN.3/2018/16)

**(n) Disability statistics**

The Commission will have before it the joint report of the Secretary-General and the Washington Group on Disability Statistics on disability statistics. The report highlights the experiences of countries in the measurement of disability and presents key findings from a series of regional meetings that were organized in 2016 and 2017. The report also presents current and planned activities on disability statistics by the Statistics Division, the regional commissions, the World Health Organization and the Washington Group on Disability Statistics. The report is aimed at linking planned activities to strengthening the capacity of national statistical systems to produce quality statistics on disability for evidence-based policies and programmes on disability.

The Commission is invited to express its views on the report, to approve the proposed programmes of work of the Statistics Division and the Washington Group and to provide guidance on future activities for strengthening national capacity to produce quality and fit-for-purpose disability statistics.

**Documentation**

Joint report of the Secretary-General and the Washington Group on Disability Statistics (E/CN.3/2018/17)

**(o) Work and employment statistics**

The Commission will have before it the report of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on recent advances in the area of work and employment statistics. The report sets out the new framework for work statistics and measures of labour underutilization adopted by the nineteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians, held in 2013, their implications for national systems of work and labour force statistics, and their significance for meeting data requirements to monitor achievements towards the Sustainable Development Goals. It also highlights the ILO programme of methodological tests, guidance development, capacity-building, technical assistance and inter-agency coordination activities undertaken to support the wide adaptation and adoption of the new standards. Recent developments in preparation for the twentieth Conference, to be held in October 2018, are also presented, including the main proposals for a suite of international standards for statistics on work relationships to be considered for adoption by the Conference, in replacement of the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-93). The Commission is invited to express its views on the progress achieved and provide guidance on the outlined programme of work of ILO to support the wide implementation of the latest standards.

**Documentation**

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the International Labour Organization on recent developments in work and employment statistics (E/CN.3/2018/18)

**(p) Ageing-related statistics and age-disaggregated data**

The Commission will have before it the report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on ageing-related statistics and age-disaggregated data. As the proportion of the world's population in the older ages continues to increase, the need for improved information to support analysis of population ageing becomes pressing. Furthermore, implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the pledge to leave no one behind requires timely and reliable data across all ages.

The report provides an overview of challenges with respect to data on older populations and includes a proposal to form a new city group, the Titchfield group on ageing-related statistics and age-disaggregated data, to address issues of conceptualization, methodology and instruments in the domains of ageing-related statistics and age-disaggregated data. The group would contribute to and build upon international standards and methods for the compilation of ageing-related statistics and age-disaggregated data, by reviewing and extending existing advances and by enlisting expertise from various countries, as well as the international, academic and non-profit sectors concerned with ageing-related statistics and age-disaggregated data. Harnessing private sector expertise in relation to innovative approaches, including big data, in the use and presentation of ageing-related statistics and age-disaggregated data will also be important.

The Commission is invited to express its views on the proposal to establish the group on ageing-related statistics and age-disaggregated data and its proposed terms of reference.

**Documentation**

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on ageing-related statistics and age-disaggregated data (E/CN.3/2018/19)

**(q) Working methods of the Statistical Commission**

The Commission will have before it a report of the Bureau on the review of the mechanism of city groups. The report revisits the history of the city group mechanism, which was established in the 1990s, and its main characteristics. It explores the extent to which the initial goals of the mechanism have been met and poses central questions for the Commission to discuss.

**Documentation**

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Bureau on working methods: review of the city group mechanism (E/CN.3/2018/20)

**4. Items for information**

The following items are presented to the Commission for information. Limited time will be allocated for interventions under this item.

**(a) Demographic statistics**

The Commission will have before it, for information, the report of the Secretary-General presenting activities carried out by the Statistics Division in the area of demographic statistics. It provides a yearly summary of the implementation of the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme, with a focus on the development and promotion of new guidelines on the use of electronic data collection technologies in population and housing censuses for the current population and housing census round. It provides information on activities relating to the promotion of the revised set of international statistical standards for civil registration and vital statistics and the handbook on operations and management of civil registration, vital statistics and identity management systems. It provides information on the collection of demographic statistics through the *Demographic Yearbook* questionnaires. It presents the summary overview of an expert group meeting on migration statistics. The Commission is invited to take note of the report.

**Documentation**

Report of the Secretary-General on demographic statistics (E/CN.3/2018/21)

**(b) Gender statistics**

The Commission will have before it, for information, the report of the Secretary-General on gender statistics. The report provides a summary of the recent activities undertaken by the Statistics Division and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics under the umbrella of the Global Gender Statistics Programme, including the revision of the minimum set of gender indicators to align it with the Sustainable Development Goal indicators framework, and the implementation of the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project. It also presents the results of capacity-building efforts to strengthen programmes on gender statistics in countries and an update on the organization of the eleventh meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics. The Commission is invited to take note of the ongoing work and future priorities on gender statistics.

**Documentation**

Report of the Secretary-General on gender statistics (E/CN.3/2018/22)

**(c) Poverty statistics**

The Commission will have before it, for information, the report of the World Bank on poverty statistics. Reducing poverty is a headline goal on both national and international development agendas. Poverty statistics are therefore central to monitoring national and international development progress. The objective of the report is fourfold. First, it provides an overview of common concepts, definitions, methods and data requirements used in national poverty measurement by Governments around the world, with a focus on monetary poverty measures. Second, it provides a summary of the history and foundation of international poverty measures and an explanation of how international poverty statistics rely on national data, methods and definitions. Third, it provides an assessment of the availability of poverty statistics, highlights data gaps and reviews challenges of comparability and disaggregation. Last, it outlines ways forward for improving national and international poverty statistics in the light of the reporting needs of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Commission is invited to take note of the report.

**Documentation**

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the World Bank on poverty statistics (E/CN.3/2018/23)

**(d) Energy statistics**

The Commission will have before it, for information, the report of the Secretary-General on energy statistics. The report provides updated information on work related to the development and implementation of international methodological documents on energy statistics, as well as new developments and challenges. The report also details the activities of increased cooperation and coordination among agencies working on energy statistics. The Commission is invited to take note of the report.

**Documentation**

Report of the Secretary-General on energy statistics (E/CN.3/2018/24)

**(e) Service statistics**

The Commission will have before it, for information, the report of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics. In its report, the Group describes its recent progress, including its development of a new five-year strategic plan, its best practices in new covered industries and its continuing discussion of several cross-cutting issues, such as bundling and e-commerce. The Group has revisited some industries since 2015, and revisited sector papers will be produced within engineering activities and telecommunication, for presentation at the session. The Group has developed a new content development framework, to be used when industry-specific papers concerning the measurement of output or prices are produced within over 85 service industries defined in the *International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, Revision 4*. The Commission is invited to take note of the report.

**Documentation**

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics (E/CN.3/2018/25)

### (f) Information and communications technology statistics

The Commission will have before it, for information, the report of the Partnership on Measuring Information and Communication Technology for Development. The report presents an overview of the recent work that the Partnership has undertaken, including updates to the core list of information and communications technology (ICT) indicators, recent developments on measuring the digital economy (such as e-commerce and international trade in ICT-enabled services), and recent progress on the use of big data for measuring the information society and measuring electronic waste. The report will also provide an overview of the availability of official ICT statistics and the Partnership's proposal to prepare a thematic list of ICT indicators for monitoring progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and will highlight challenges faced by national statistical offices in producing ICT statistics, including those related to capacity-building. The Commission is invited to take note of the report.

#### Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Partnership on Measuring Information and Communication Technology for Development (E/CN.3/2018/26)

### (g) International Comparison Programme and price statistics

The Commission will have before it, for information, the report of the World Bank on the International Comparison Programme (ICP). The report outlines the activities undertaken in 2017 at the global and regional levels to complete interim comparisons, launch the implementation of the ICP 2017 comparison cycle and transform the ICP into a permanent programme. The report details the governance, technical, capacity-building and advocacy activities carried out in this regard. The Commission is invited to take note of the progress made to date.

The Commission will also have before it, as a background document, the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics presenting its recent work.

#### Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the World Bank on International Comparision Programme (E/CN.3/2018/27)

### (h) Digital trade and e-commerce statistics

The Commission will have before it the report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on International Trade Statistics on digital trade and e-commerce statistics. The report presents an overview of the changing nature, patterns and actors in international trade driven by the movement of electronic data across borders. This trend raises important policy questions regarding the size and importance of these flows, the opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises, and the barriers and regulations, including data protection. Digital trade is for now defined as all cross-border trade transactions that are either digitally ordered, platform enabled or digitally delivered. Many questions remain on measurement issues, which the report points out. Measurement guidelines in this area do not currently exist. The Commission is invited to take note of the report.

#### Documentation

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on International Trade Statistics (E/CN.3/2018/28)

**(i) Statistics on science, technology and innovation**

The Commission will have before it, for information, the report of the Institute for Statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in which they describe their work on science, technology and innovation statistics. The report presents recent developments in the measurement of science, technology and innovation, with particular emphasis on the recent revision and ongoing implementation of the OECD Frascati Manual, which was published in 2015 and is the standard for measuring research and development recognized worldwide. Another key feature is the progress of work to revise the Oslo Manual, which provides guidelines for data about innovation in business and provides a pathway for extending the measurement of innovation to other sectors. Furthermore, it provides an overview of the revision process being carried out on the concept of scientific and technological activities, defined in the Recommendation Concerning the International Standardization of Statistics on Science and Technology, adopted by UNESCO in 1978. Among other things, the report also highlights efforts to develop a thematic set of science, technology and innovation indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals, in order to provide broader information on the science, technology and innovation components of the Goals and targets than currently included in the core set of Goals. The Commission is invited to take note of the report.

**Documentation**

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Institute for Statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development on statistics on science, technology and innovation (E/CN.3/2018/29)

**(j) Informal sector statistics**

The Commission will have before it, for information, the report of the Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics. The report provides an update on recent activities and meetings and outlines the plans of the Delhi Group. The Commission is invited to take note of the report.

**Documentation**

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics (E/CN.3/2018/30)

**(k) Environment statistics**

The Commission will have before it, for information, the report of the Secretary-General on environment statistics. The report contains a summary of activities carried out in 2017, including progress on the implementation of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics 2013, developments in methodological work, including the Environment Statistics Self-Assessment Tool and the Manual on the Basic Set of Environment Statistics, the fourth meeting of the Expert Group on Environment Statistics, and training and capacity-building provided to regions, subregions and countries. It also sets out the workplan for 2018–2019. As the programme of work includes the global collection, compilation and dissemination of environment statistics and indicators, the present report: (a) provides a summary of the results of the international collections of environment statistics carried out by the Statistics Division from 1999 to 2016, and conclusions with relevance to future work,

especially with regard to the environment-related Sustainable Development Goals, and (b) outlines a programme of work for the improvement of the regular collection, compilation and dissemination of international environment statistics. The Commission is invited to take note of the report.

**Documentation**

Report of the Secretary-General on environment statistics (E/CN.3/2018/31)

**(l) Coordination of statistical programmes**

The Commission will have before it, for information, the report of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities, which contains a summary of the work undertaken by the Committee in 2017, including the main conclusions of the twenty-ninth and thirtieth sessions of the Committee, held in 2017. The Commission is invited to take note of the report.

**Documentation**

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (E/CN.3/2018/32)

**(m) Integration of statistical and geospatial information**

The Commission will have before it, for information, the report of the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information on its recent activities. In its report, the Expert Group provides information on its focus on the consolidation and implementation of the five guiding principles of the global statistical-geospatial framework, including in the preparation of country-level examples. The Commission is invited to note the Group's progress on its work to consolidate and implement the framework, as well as the Group's views on coordinating activities in the area of integration of statistical and geospatial information.

**Documentation**

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information (E/CN.3/2018/33)

**(n) Governance, peace and security statistics**

The Commission will have before it, for information, the report of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics. The report details the progress in the implementation of the activities of the 2016–2020 road map and the actions taken to develop a handbook on governance statistics. It also includes the technical-methodological work developed with the seven tier III Sustainable Development Goal indicators assumed by the Praia Group. As defined in the road map, the Praia Group will submit the handbook to the Statistical Commission in March 2020. The Commission is invited to take note of the report.

**Documentation**

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics (E/CN.3/2018/34)

**(o) Follow-up to the policy decisions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council**

The Commission will have before it, for information, a note by the Secretary-General containing extracts from resolutions, decisions and agreed conclusions adopted by the

General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council or other functional commissions that are relevant to the work of the Statistical Commission. The report also contains a description of the actions taken to date by the Statistical Commission and the Statistics Division and those suggested to be taken in response to the decisions and mandates of the parent bodies. The Commission may wish to take those actions into account in its discussions under relevant agenda items. The Commission is invited to take note of the report.

**Documentation**

Note by the Secretary-General on policy decisions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council that are relevant to the work of the Statistical Commission (E/CN.3/2018/35)

**5. Programme questions (Statistics Division)**

The Commission will receive an oral report from the Director of the Statistics Division concerning current activities, plans and priorities.

**6. Provisional agenda and dates for the fiftieth session of the Commission**

In accordance with rule 9 of the rules of procedure, the Commission will have before it the draft provisional agenda for its fiftieth session, together with an indication of the documents to be submitted under each item. The Commission will also have before it a proposal for the dates of the session. In accordance with a request of the Council (see Council resolution 1999/51), the Commission will have before it a draft multi-year programme of work for 2018–2022. The Commission is invited to approve the dates, provisional agenda and documentation for its fiftieth session, as well as to approve the multi-year programme of work.

**Documentation**

Note by the Secretariat containing the draft provisional agenda for the fiftieth session of the Commission (E/CN.3/2018/L.2)

Note by the Secretariat on the draft multi-year programme of work of the Statistical Commission 2018–2022 (E/CN.3/2018/36)

**7. Report of the Commission on its forty-ninth session**

The Commission will have before it the procedural report of the forty-ninth session of the Commission covering organizational matters relating to the Commission's work. The Commission will also have before it an informal paper containing the draft decisions submitted by the Rapporteur.

The Commission is invited to adopt the draft report on its forty-ninth session, including the draft decisions, which will be submitted to the Council, and to entrust the Rapporteur with streamlining and finalizing it.

**Documentation**

Draft report of the Commission on its forty-ninth session

Informal paper with draft decisions

United Nations E/CN.3/2018/2

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
19 December 2017

Original: English

**Statistical Commission**
**Forty-ninth session**
6–9 March 2018
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda
**Items for discussion and decision: data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

# Report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators

## Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2017/228 and past practices, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators. The present report provides an overview of the ongoing work of the Expert Group for the implementation of the global indicator framework for the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This encompasses a description of the activities undertaken by the Group pursuant to Statistical Commission decision 48/101, including (a) methodological development of tier III indicators and updates to the tier classification; (b) annual refinements of some indicators and a timeline for the 2020 comprehensive review; (c) guidelines and best practices on data flows and global data reporting for the Sustainable Development Goals; and (d) work carried out in the data disaggregation work stream and by the working groups on interlinkages, Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX) and geospatial information. The Commission will also have before it a background document on the guidelines on data flows and global data reporting for the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Statistical Commission is invited to comment on progress made by the Expert Group and the direction of future work. The points for discussion by the Commission are set out in paragraph 34 of this present report.

* E/CN.3/2018/1

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# Report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators

## I. Introduction

1. As mandated in General Assembly resolution 70/1, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators has been tasked to develop and implement the global indicator framework for the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Expert Group, whose formation was endorsed by the Statistical Commission at its forty-sixth session (decision 46/101), submitted an initial global indicator framework to the Commission at its forty-seventh session in March 2016. The Commission, in its decision 47/101, agreed, as a practical starting point, with the proposed global indicator framework, subject to future technical refinement.

2. The Expert Group examined possible refinements of the global indicator framework pursuant to Statistical Commission decision 47/101 and proposed a revised global indicator framework at the forty-eighth session of the Commission. The Commission, in its decision 48/101, agreed on the revised global indicator framework for the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including refinements on several indicators, and stressed that that agreement fulfilled substantially the promise of delivering a global indicator framework for the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda, as requested by the General Assembly. At its forty-eighth session, the Commission recommended to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of a draft resolution containing the global indicator framework.

3. At its 2017 session, the Economic and Social Council, in its decision 2017/228 of 7 June 2017, took note of the report of the Statistical Commission on its forty-eighth session which contained the draft resolution recommended for adoption by the Council. At its seventy-first session, on 6 July 2017, the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/313, in which it took note of the work of the Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and adopted the global indicator framework as a voluntary and country-led instrument that includes the initial set of indicators to be refined annually and reviewed comprehensively by the Commission at its fifty-first session, to be held in 2020, and its fifty-sixth session, to be held in 2025, and will be complemented by indicators at the regional and national levels, which would be developed by Member States.

4. The present report describes the work carried out by the Expert Group from March 2017 to December 2017 for the implementation of the global indicator framework, on the basis of the work programme agreed by the Commission and in accordance with Statistical Commission decision 48/101.

## II. Implementation of the global indicator framework

5. In 2017, the Expert Group held two physical meetings, each attended by some 150 representatives from member countries, observer countries, international and regional organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector. Between meetings, the Expert Group continued to interact electronically and through teleconferences.

6. The fifth meeting of the Expert Group, hosted by Statistics Canada, was held in Ottawa from 28 to 31 March 2017. The sixth meeting, hosted by the Center for Strategic, International and Energy Studies of Bahrain, was held in Manama from 11 to 14 November 2017. At those two meetings, the Expert Group discussed progress made on the methodological development of tier III indicators and reviewed and updated the tier classification; reviewed annual refinements for a few selected indicators; discussed the proposed guidelines on data flows and global data reporting and the data-collection calendar; reviewed the work carried out by the work stream on data disaggregation and the three working groups; and shared experiences on Sustainable Development Goal implementation and reporting at national, regional, global and thematic levels.

7. In accordance with the revised terms of reference of the Expert Group and the mechanism for the rotation of its membership and chairmanship, as agreed by the Statistical Commission in its decision 48/101, in May 2017, new members of the Expert Group were nominated through existing regional mechanisms. Annex I to the present report sets out the updated membership of the Group. At the sixth meeting, Albina Chuwa (United Republic of Tanzania) was elected co-chair of the Expert Group, replacing Lisa Bersales (Philippines) and joining Enrique Ordaz (Mexico) in leading the work of the Group.

## A. Review of the tier classification and methodology for development of tier III indicators

8. At its fifth meeting, the Expert Group clarified the criteria and definitions for tier classification, as follows:

(a) Tier I: indicator is conceptually clear and has an internationally established methodology and available standards, and data are regularly produced by countries for at least 50 per cent of countries and for 50 per cent of the population in every region where the indicator is relevant;

(b) Tier II: indicator is conceptually clear and has an internationally established methodology and available standards, but data are not regularly produced by countries;

(c) Tier III: no internationally established methodology or standards are yet available for the indicator, but methodology or standards are being (or will be) developed or tested.

9. In accordance with the mechanism for updating the classification of the indicators, the Expert Group reviewed the tier classification of the indicators during its fifth and sixth meetings. The Group focused particularly on indicators that had been refined and approved at the forty-eighth session of the Statistical Commission, tier III indicators for which sufficient advancements in methodological development had been achieved, and all tier I and II indicators based on data availability at the global and regional levels.

10. Tier classification was reviewed at the fifth meeting of the Group for the 11 refined indicators in the revised global indicator framework, as adopted at the forty-eighth session of the Statistical Commission. Ten were classified tier III indicators and 1 was classified as a tier II indicator based on their methodological development and data availability at the global level. In addition, five indicators modified within the context of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 were

reviewed at the same meeting, of which four were classified as tier II indicators and one as a tier III indicator.

11. As significant progress has been made in the methodological development of many tier III indicators, there were several requests for the reclassification of tier III indicators which were considered by the Expert Group. In advance of the meetings of the Expert Group, agencies were invited to provide, at least one month before the meeting, supporting documents for the reclassification of tier III indicators, which were to include (a) a request summary of from one to two pages in length; (b) draft metadata; (c) a full methodology development narrative (including a list of pilot countries, data and other results emanating from the pilot studies); and (d) any other relevant material. It was intended that the documents would provide information on the nature of the involvement of the national statistical system and, in particular, national statistical offices in methodology development and on when the methodology had been accepted as an international standard. At the fifth meeting of the Group, 12 indicators were reviewed for reclassification, with 4 being moved to tier II. At the sixth meeting of the Group and a subsequent WebEx meeting, owing to advancements in methodological development, a further 29 tier III indicators were reviewed for reclassification, of which 17 were reclassified in tier II. The Group provided feedback to custodian agencies on those indicators that could not be reclassified, indicating the specific methodological work that would need to be conducted before reclassification could be reconsidered.

12. Pursuant to the approved work programme of the Expert Group, a review of the availability of data for tier I and II indicators was conducted. Data availability as of 28 August 2017 for all tier I and II indicators was reviewed in the global indicator database in order to assess country and population coverage for each region where the indicator was relevant. The assessment concluded that eight tier I indicators did not have sufficient data coverage and should therefore be moved to tier II and that 19 Tier II indicators met the criteria for classification to tier I.

13. Based on the updates to the tier classification following these reviews, as of 1 December 2017, the updated tier classification comprised 93 tier I indicators, 66 tier II indicators and 68 tier III indicators. In addition, there were five indicators classified in multiple tiers (that is, different components of those indicators were classified in different tiers). The updated tier classification is available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/tier-classification/.

14. Given the large number of tier reclassification requests received in advance of the Expert Group meetings and the urgent need to reclassify an indicator when methodological development had advanced, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group revised its mechanism for updating the classification of indicators. When requirements are met, the review of reclassification requests will be conducted throughout the year, at the two physical meetings and WebEx meetings, based on a calendar developed by the Group. The Group plans to hold Webex meetings every two months, if needed, to review tier reclassification requests. Custodian agencies are required to provide their supporting documents at least one month in advance of these meetings to ensure that the members of the Group have sufficient time to review all documents.

15. In accordance with its work programme (see E/CN.3/2017/2, para. 35 (a)), the Expert Group developed procedures for the review of workplans for tier III indicators. Throughout the year, the Group conducted a thorough review of tier III workplans, flagging any issues in the current methodological work, in particular for those making reference to targets with a 2020 deadline. Key issues identified by the Group included

(a) workplans or timelines requiring more clarification; (b) timelines for some workplans that would not meet the 2020 deadline; (c) workplans whose methodology was already complete and under which data collection had begun; and (d) workplans with limited information or under which methodological development had not yet begun. The Group followed up with the custodian agencies on the issues identified.

16. Agencies were invited to provide updated workplans to ensure the acceleration of methodological development, where needed. Over 40 updated workplans were submitted. All tier III workplans are available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/tierIII-indicators/. Workplans are currently missing for a few indicators that remain without an active custodian agency. If an indicator remains without a custodian agency, the Expert Group has indicated that it may be refined or removed at the comprehensive review in 2020.

## B. Improving data flows and global data reporting for Sustainable Development Goals

17. In its decision 48/101 (para. (l)), the Statistical Commission requested the Expert Group to develop guidelines on how custodian agencies and countries can work together to contribute to the data flows necessary to have harmonized statistics. An initial drafting team was established at the fifth meeting of the Group in March 2017. Relevant key inputs were provided to this process. In this regard: (a) the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) developed a document outlining the guiding principles of data reporting and data sharing for the global monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was shared with the Expert Group in October 2017; (b) as requested by the Expert Group, a series of case studies on data flows and data reporting for seven representative global indicators were carried out to highlight the different ways in which data for these indicators flow from the national to the regional and international levels; and (c) the Economic Commission for Europe conducted data flow pilot studies designed to cover the experiences, needs and resources of the main actors involved in producing statistics for the Sustainable Development Goals. The results of the studies were shared with the Group at its sixth meeting and the valuable inputs will be incorporated in the draft document.

18. The drafting team of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators presented a first draft of the document entitled "Guidelines and best practices on data flows and global data reporting for Sustainable Development Goals" at the Group's sixth meeting. It was decided to split the document into two parts, one on guidelines and the other on best practices (which would be constitute a "living document", to be updated when new experiences become available). Going forward, the drafting team will revise the guidelines on the basis of the feedback received from countries, agencies and stakeholders at the meeting and an updated draft will be circulated to both countries and custodian agencies, for an open consultation, in the period from December 2017 to 12 January 2018. Comments and inputs arising from the open consultation will be taken into consideration and a finalized document will be made available to the Statistical Commission, by 15 February 2018, as a background document for its forty-ninth session. A document on best practices with respect to the data flows between countries and custodian agencies will be prepared before the fiftieth session of the Commission in 2019.

19. In addition, two exercises were carried out with a view to improving data flows and global data reporting for Sustainable Development Goals. The first entailed the compilation of data-collection calendars. In accordance with Statistical Commission decision 48/101 (k), custodian agencies were requested to provide a list of national agencies providing data to the international system and share data-collection calendars in order to ensure the full traceability of data used in international sources. A form was sent to custodian agencies for tier I and tier II indicators in August 2017 by the Secretariat requesting information on agencies' data-collection processes, including a list of national entities providing data to the international system, periodicity of data collection and focal point information for the indicators. Information for over 100 indicators was received and will be made available in advance of the forty-ninth session of the Statistical Commission at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/.

20. The second exercise entailed collection of information on Sustainable Development Goal data contact persons in national statistical offices. To assist in strengthening the central coordinating role of national statistical offices, the Secretariat requested voluntary contact information from those offices on a designated Sustainable Development Goal data contact person (or contact persons) who could be kept informed systematically through email on the times when custodian agencies were collecting, processing and disseminating data for Sustainable Development Goal indicators, including in those cases where the custodian agency's primary contact was in a line ministry. As of 1 December 2017, contact information had been received for more than 90 countries. The information will be shared with the international agencies responsible for the collection, processing and dissemination of Sustainable Development Goals-related data.

## C. Sustainable Development Goal implementation at national, regional, global and thematic levels

21. At the sixth meeting of the Expert Group, countries, regional commissions, international agencies and stakeholders presented their experiences on Sustainable Development Goal implementation and reporting at national, regional, global and thematic levels.[1] Country presentations focused on sharing national experiences and challenges in implementing the indicator framework and Sustainable Development Goal reporting. Several regional organizations and international agencies shared regional and thematic experiences on Sustainable Development Goal monitoring. Many countries are developing national data platforms for Sustainable Development Goal reporting and are working closely with potential partners, including civil society organizations. One of the major challenges noted was related to data gaps for those indicators under the tier II and III categories. Additionally, information was provided on the work carried out by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, in cooperation with the United Nations system, in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as reflected in document E/CN.3/2018/3.

[1] Relevant documents are available, under agenda item 8, at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/meetings/iaeg-sdgs-meeting-06/ (Documents: Agenda item 8).

# III. Working groups and work stream of the Expert Group

## A. Working groups of the Expert Group

22. Three working groups were established by the Expert Group in March 2016, focusing on the following topics: Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX), geospatial information and interlinkages. Each working group is composed of members of the Expert Group and other invited representatives, as determined by their respective terms of reference.[2] A brief summary of the work of each group in 2017 and a description of future meetings and work are provided below.

### 1. Working group on Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX)

23. The working group on Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange (SDMX), chaired by Colombia, consists of 12 country members and 10 international agency members. The working group will develop a data structure definition or data structure definitions and a metadata structure definition or metadata structure definitions for all Sustainable Development Goal indicators, which will be used to report on and disseminate the Sustainable Development Goal indicators at the national and international levels. Challenges faced by the working group entail, inter alia, the diversity of and possible changes to the Sustainable Development Goal indicators; the need to address the issue of ability to report and disseminate at multiple levels; the vast number and diversity of stakeholders and counterparts; and the need to ensure that countries are able to adapt the data structure definition or definitions suited to their own needs.

24. The working group has conducted monthly teleconferences. Its second meeting, held in October 2017, focused on (a) disaggregation; (b) remaining code lists; and (c) metadata concepts and metadata structure definition or definitions. Moving forward, the working group planned to develop initial data structure definitions by the end of 2017. It would then conduct a pilot data exchange in the first quarter of 2018, followed by a production phase of data exchange in the fourth quarter of 2018. The development of a metadata structure definition or metadata structure definitions is also planned for the fourth quarter of 2018.

### 2. Working group on geospatial information

25. The working group on geospatial information currently consists of 16 country members and six international agency members (further information is available at the working group website (http://ggim.un.org/UNGGIM-wg6/)). At its third meeting, held in Kunming, China, from 6 to 8 May 2017, the working group, co-chaired by Mexico and Sweden, deliberated on issues related to disaggregation according to geographical location, and data availability for production of indicators. The group recognized that disaggregation of national statistical data can be strengthened considerably through deployment of the "geographical location" lens, and that there was a need to demonstrate the availability and usability of geospatial information, including Earth observations for Sustainable Development Goal monitoring.

26. The working group held a fourth meeting, in New York from 6 to 8 December 2017, to generate progress in its work on disaggregation and data availability. The

[2] The terms of reference, membership and other important information for each working group can be found at http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/.

meeting considered additional issues including liaising with and contributing to the work of custodian agencies and capacity development for national statistical systems in geostatistical processes. The meeting concluded with an agreement to focus on task streams on disaggregation according to geographical location and aggregation of geocoded unit-level data and "production-ready" data for indicators. Other tasks will focus on issues related to working with custodian agencies, availability and usability of geospatial information, case studies and exemplars, and capacity development.

### 3. Working group on interlinkages

27. The working group on interlinkages currently consists of 11 country members and eight representatives from academia, international and regional organizations and civil society organizations. The group, which is co-chaired by Canada and China, conducts most of its meetings by WebEx and through email. The working group has focused on identifying possible interlinkages within the global indicator framework. An open global consultation was launched by the working group in November 2017, with the aim of identifying interlinkages, integrated analyses, and areas and frameworks that can facilitate the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals. The group plans to report back to the Expert Group in the second quarter of 2018 on the results of the consultation and its plan for developing best practices and strategies for harnessing those interlinkages.

### 4. Joint subgroup of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

28. In addition to the three working groups, there exists a joint subgroup of the Expert Group and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is developing a plan to address immediate priorities, including statistical capacity-building. The group, which is in partnership with the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) and supported by the Statistics Division, will conduct a survey on capacity-building from December 2017 to January 2018 with a view to providing an overview of the types of capacity-building activities needed and will consider a financing mechanism.[1]

## B. Work stream on data disaggregation

29. In paragraph j of its decision 48/101, the Statistical Commission welcomed the work stream on data disaggregation. Under its work programme (see E/CN.3/2017/2, para. 35 (d)), the Expert Group was tasked with developing further guidance on the issue of data disaggregation. In pursuance of that goal, the Group formed a data disaggregation drafting team to develop a more detailed workplan for the data disaggregation work stream and an initial stocktaking document. The drafting team, which consists of nine country members led by Germany and Ghana, held several virtual meetings and a physical meeting on the sidelines of the United Nations World Data Forum in January 2017.

30. The Expert Group developed a document containing a stocktaking analysis of availability of data disaggregation in the global Sustainable Development Goals

[1] For more information on the joint subgroup, see E/CN.3/2018/4.

database and an overview of existing and possible standards of disaggregation. The Group also identified key challenges on which to focus. The Group planned to establish a mechanism for collaboration and consultation with specialized groups and custodian agencies in relation to specific data disaggregation dimensions (e.g., age, sex and disability) in December 2017. The Group will prepare a background document on data disaggregation for consideration by the Statistical Commission at its fiftieth session in 2019.

## IV. Annual refinements and a timeline for the 2020 comprehensive review

31. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/313 and the plan and criteria agreed by the Expert Group with respect to possible annual minor refinements,[4] the Group reviewed the list of indicators proposed by its members for possible refinements. At its sixth meeting, the Expert Group proposed four annual refinements based on the agreed criteria. The list of those refinements is set out in annex II to this report.

32. The Expert Group established a timeline for the 2020 comprehensive review. The proposed timeline can be broken down as follows: (a) from December 2017 to February 2018, the Group will review the current list of 37 possible additional indicators for 33 targets,[5] to determine which should be included in an open consultation; (b) by end 2018, an open consultation on the proposed possible additional indicators will be launched; (c) by mid-2019, the Group will review indicators and propose changes and possible deletions based on the criteria set out in the 15 December 2016 report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators to the Statistical Commission (E/CN.3/2017/2, para. 22) and carry out an open consultation; (d) by September 2019, the Group will review the results of the consultations and give preference to those proposals including an established methodology and available data; and (e) by end 2019, the Group will prepare the final proposal for the 2020 review for the consideration of the Commission.

## V. Work programme of the Expert Group

33. It is suggested that the Expert Group carry out the following activities between March 2018 and March 2019:

(a) Continue the review of workplans for tier III indicators and reclassify indicators when requirements are met, at the two physical meetings and through WebEx meetings every two months, if needed;

(b) Conduct an open consultation and finalize the proposal for additional indicators to be presented as part of the comprehensive review, for consideration by the Statistical Commission at its fifty-first session in 2020;

[4] See E/CN.3/2017/2, para. 21.

[5] See E/CN.3/2017/2, annex V, entitled "Possible additional indicators for inclusion in the Sustainable Development Goal indicators".

(c) Begin work on the comprehensive review by compiling a preliminary list of possible changes, refinements and deletions for the indicator framework for an open consultation in mid-2019;

(d) Continue the work of the joint subgroup of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by reviewing data availability and capacity-building needs for tier I and II indicators;

(e) Establish a mechanism for discussion with specialized groups and custodian agencies on specific data disaggregation dimensions (e.g., age, sex and disability) and finalize a document for consideration at the fiftieth session of the Statistical Commission in 2019;

(f) Support the continuation of the work of the three working groups, on Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange, geospatial information and interlinkages;

(g) Develop a living document on best practices for the data flows between countries and custodian agencies;

(h) Hold two meetings, one in the first and the second in the fourth quarter of 2018, on dates to be determined, and continue to interact electronically and through teleconferences, as needed.

## VI. Points for discussion

34. **The Statistical Commission is invited to:**

(a) **Take note of the work conducted by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators in response to the decisions of the Statistical Commission;**

(b) **Express its views and adopt the annual refinements of some indicators in the global indicator framework, as presented in annex II to this report; and express its views on the guidelines on data flows and global data reporting for Sustainable Development Goals, as contained in the background document;**

(c) **Express its views and adopt the proposed work programme of the Expert Group for 2018.**

# Annex I

## Updated list of members of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators

**Chair of the Statistical Commission***

- Brazil

**Eastern Africa**

- Ethiopia
- United Republic of Tanzania

**Middle and Southern Africa**

- Botswana
- Cameroon

**Western Africa**

- Ghana
- Niger

**Northern Africa**

- Algeria
- Egypt

**Western Asia**

- Bahrain

**Central, Eastern, Southern and South-Eastern Asia**

- China
- India
- Tajikistan
- Philippines

**Oceania**

- Fiji
- Samoa

**Caribbean**

- Grenada
- Trinidad and Tobago

**Central and South America**

- Brazil
- Colombia
- Mexico

* The Chair of the Statistical Commission is an ex officio member of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators.

**Eastern Europe**

- Belarus
- Russian Federation

**Northern America and Northern, Southern and Western Europe**

- Canada
- France
- Germany
- Netherlands
- Sweden

# Annex II

## Annual refinements to be made to the global indicator framework

| Goals and targets (from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) | Refinement of indicator |
|---|---|
| **Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere** | |
| 1.4.2 Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure | 1.4.2 Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, (a) with legally recognized documentation, and (b) who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and type of tenure |
| **Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all** | |
| 6.2.1 Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water | 6.2.1 Proportion of population using (a) safely managed sanitation services and (b) a hand-washing facility with soap and water |
| **Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels** | |
| 16.1.3 Proportion of population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months | 16.1.3 Proportion of population subjected to (a) physical violence, (b) psychological violence and (c) sexual violence in the previous 12 months |
| **Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development** | |
| 17.17.1 Amount of United States dollars committed to public-private partnerships and civil society partnerships | 17.17.1 Amount of United States dollars committed to (a) public-private partnerships and (b) civil society partnerships |

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6–9 March 2018
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**Items for discussion and decision: data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

# Work on the review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals

## Report of the Secretary-General

*Summary*

The present report, which was prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2017/228 and past practices, provides information about the work carried out by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, in cooperation with other entities of the United Nations system, in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It describes the preparation of the annual report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (E/2017/66), as mandated by the General Assembly (see resolution 70/1, para. 83). Also described is the work undertaken to update the database on the global indicators, including the data and metadata repository, and support countries in the implementation of the indicators at the national level. In addition, the present report informs the Statistical Commission about the conference on national reporting platforms, the research exercise on the piloting of a federated system of national and global data hubs and the establishment of the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training. The Commission is invited to take note of the work carried out by the Statistics Division in cooperation with the United Nations system and to comment and agree upon the way forward in relation to the results of the conference, the research exercise and the establishment of the network and its proposed work programme.

* E/CN.3/2018/1

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# I. Introduction

1. In order to promote accountability to their citizens, Member States committed to providing a systematic follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national, regional and global levels. The high-level political forum on sustainable development was mandated to play a central role in overseeing the follow-up and review processes at the global level. Member States agreed that the follow-up and review at the high-level political forum would be informed by an annual progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals to be prepared by the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the United Nations system, based on the global indicator framework and the data produced by national statistical systems and information collected at the regional level (see General Assembly resolution 70/1, para. 83). Furthermore, Member States requested the Secretary-General to continue to maintain the Sustainable Development Goals global indicator database to inform the yearly progress report on the Goals and to ensure transparency on the data, statistics and metadata presented on countries and used for the regional and global aggregates, and urged countries, the United Nations funds and programmes, the specialized agencies, the Secretariat, including the regional commissions, the Bretton Woods institutions, international organizations and bilateral and regional funding agencies to intensify their support for strengthening data collection and statistical capacity-building, including capacity-building that strengthens coordination among national statistical offices, as appropriate and within their mandates, in a coordinated manner that recognizes national priorities and reflects national ownership of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (see General Assembly resolution 71/313, paras. 4 and 11).

# II. Second progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals

2. In the annual report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (E/2017/66), the high-level political forum on sustainable development was informed about the global progress made in delivering on the Goals and targets in the second year of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The report is based on the global indicator framework that was developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 71/313. A supplementary statistical annex containing detailed global and regional aggregates of the indicators was released to accompany the progress report.[1]

3. In addition, the *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2017*[2] was launched by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs on 17 July 2017. It includes data and analysis on the Sustainable Development Goals intended for a wider audience in a user-friendly format with charts and infographics on selected indicators for which data are available.

4. The reports show that, while considerable progress has been made over the past decade across all areas of development, the pace of progress observed in previous years is insufficient to fully meet the Sustainable Development Goals and targets by 2030. Time is therefore of the essence. Moreover, progress has not always been equitable. Advancements have been uneven across regions, between the sexes, and among people of different ages, wealth and locales, including urban and rural

[1] The report and statistical annex are available from https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/.

[2] Available from http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2017/.

dwellers. Faster and more inclusive progress is needed to accomplish the bold vision articulated in the 2030 Agenda.

5. The reports provide an overview of global progress towards the 17 Goals of the 2030 Agenda, on the basis of the indicators for which data are available. Some targets are not reflected, either because of a lack of data or because they are measured by indicators that are still undergoing methodological development. For most indicators, values represent global, regional and subregional aggregates. They are calculated from data compiled by international agencies from national statistical systems on the basis of their respective mandates and specialized expertise. National data are often adjusted for international comparability and, where lacking, are estimated by international agencies. The reports are prepared by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, with input from the entire United Nations system, including international and regional agencies that contributed data and analysis based on their mandates and expertise.

6. The two annual reports provide important information to Member States for their deliberations at the high-level political forum on sustainable development and inform the media and the public about the progress made towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The reports are well received by policymakers and the general public.

## III. Sustainable Development Goal indicators website

7. The *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2017* was complemented by the release of the Sustainable Development Goals indicators database,[3] which provides transparency on the data used for global reporting. The database contains data on the global Sustainable Development Goal indicators used in the two above-mentioned reports and includes country-level data as well as regional and global aggregates. The database, maintained by the Statistics Division, includes data for 132 of the 232 global indicators and a total of 460,000 data records. The data series comprise Sustainable Development Goal indicators series and additional data series under many of the indicators.[4] Efforts are currently under way to upgrade the database user interface to enable the data to be accessed in a more interactive and convenient way. In addition, the recently launched global Sustainable Development Goal indicators application programming interface provides programmatic access to the global indicators database using the OpenAPI specification.[5]

8. The data and accompanying metadata have been provided by international agencies and entities according to their respective mandates. The metadata repository[6] contains metadata for the indicators that are currently included in the database. The metadata follow a template discussed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and provide information on the data source and compilation process followed by the international agencies. Often, national data were adjusted for international comparability or, where data were missing, they were estimated. Data estimated at the national level and used for the calculation of global and regional aggregates are not always made available. For each indicator value, the

[3] Available from http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/.

[4] The data series identified by the symbol "SD" correspond to the global indicator framework that was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 71/313. Additional series are identified by the symbol "+".

[5] The Sustainable Development Goal indicators application programming interface documentation is available from https://unstats.un.org/SDGAPI/swagger/.

[6] Available from http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/.

responsible international agency is requested to indicate whether the national data were adjusted, estimated, modelled or are the result of global monitoring.[7]

9. The metadata and their presentation will be further improved in consultation with countries and regional and international agencies. The efforts to develop comprehensive metadata on the global Sustainable Development Goal indicators are complemented by the development of an e-handbook on the indicators to provide compilation guidance to countries. Similarly, efforts will continue to ensure and improve the presentation and quality of the data, including through the establishment of an upgraded data processing and dissemination system.

10. The Sustainable Development Goal indicators website, maintained by the Statistics Division, presents all information related to the development and implementation of the indicator framework. It provides access to the related reports, the global indicators database and the metadata repository. It also contains information on the work and activities of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## IV. Development cooperation and technical assistance activities of the Statistics Division on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators

11. The Statistics Division, the regional commissions, the specialized agencies and the funds and programmes of the United Nations system have always worked closely together in the area of statistical development. Currently, a $10-million United Nations Development Account programme, with the participation of all regional commissions, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the Statistics Division, is being implemented to strengthen national statistical systems for the follow-up and review of the Sustainable Development Goals and to address specific data gaps. The programme is structured according to four pillars: means of implementation, environment statistics and indicators, social and demographic statistics and indicators, and economic statistics and indicators. The implementation began gradually during the fourth quarter of 2016. Most activities under the four pillars were initially carried out at the regional and subregional levels and then progressively focused on country missions, national training workshops, the development of guidelines, the collection of good practices and the development of online training courses. By mid-2019, the programme is expected to conclude with a series of subregional and regional workshops.

[7] The nature or type of the data in the indicators database is determined as follows: country data are produced and disseminated by the country (including data adjusted by the country to meet international standards); country data adjusted are produced and provided by the country, but adjusted by the international agency for international comparability to comply with internationally agreed standards, definitions and classifications; estimated data are estimated based on national data, such as surveys or administrative records, or other sources, but on the same variable being estimated, and produced by the international agency when country data for some year(s) are not available, when multiple sources exist or when there are data quality issues; modelled data are modelled by the agency on the basis of other covariates when there is a complete lack of data on the variable being estimated; global monitoring data are produced on a regular basis by the designated agency for global monitoring, based on country data, and there is no corresponding figure at the country level.

12. The Statistics Division is currently concluding two more United Nations Development Account projects, which are aimed at enhancing the statistical capacity of Member States for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals. One project provides assistance to national statistical offices in six pilot countries to measure, monitor, assess and report on progress on achieving the 2030 Agenda. One of its main outputs has been an assessment of the statistical capacity of the pilot countries to monitor the global Sustainable Development Goal indicators. The other project supports Member States' efforts to develop and strengthen environment statistics and integrated environmental-economic accounting for improved monitoring of sustainable development.

13. In December 2016, the Statistics Division formally agreed to conduct a project with the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to make the Sustainable Development Goal indicators available to the broadest possible audience and to strengthen the capacity of countries in the compilation and use of the indicators. The project, which is funded by the Department for International Development and implemented by the Statistics Division, has a total budget of 6.6 million pounds sterling and covers 20 countries across Africa and Asia, nine of which participated in a previous project of the Statistics Division and the Department for International Development on the Millennium Development Goal indicators.[8] It will run until the end of June 2021.

14. The main project activities are the research and analysis of country capacities, the development of national strategies for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals, the creation or upgrade of national repositories of Sustainable Development Goal indicators, the development of a Sustainable Development Goal data and visualization platform and a country data lab, and the establishment of an automated data exchange based on the statistical data and metadata exchange standard. The Statistics Division has completed the inception phase of the project and is now moving towards its full implementation, which will involve assessment missions to countries that did not participate in the previous project.

15. In the context of the implementation of the project, and in order to provide a space for discussing specific country needs for reporting platforms and review possible solutions, the Statistics Division is organizing a conference on national platforms for reporting on the Sustainable Development Goal indicators, to be held from 22 to 24 January 2018 in New York. The urgency of establishing such platforms in both developing and developed countries has been underlined in discussions in several forums. The conference will review best practices, discuss and showcase possible solutions and identify ways forward for their implementation. Recommendations and guidelines for the basic requisites of national data platforms for follow-up and reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals will be provided in a background document to the Commission.

16. The Statistics Division works closely with other international agencies within the United Nations Development Group to provide assistance to countries on implementing the Sustainable Development Goal indicators and strengthening statistical capacities for the 2030 Agenda. The Statistics Division also co-chaired, with the United Nations Development Programme, a task team to develop guidelines to support country reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals, which were issued in early 2017.[9]

[8] The evaluation report of the previous project is available from www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-improving-the-collation-availability-and-dissemination-of-national-development-indicators-including-mdgs.

[9] Available from https://undg.org/document/guidelines-to-support-country-reporting-on-the-sustainable-development-goals/.

17. A comprehensive overview of the Statistics Division's activities on technical capacity-building, including those related to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators, was provided to the Statistical Commission at its forty-eighth session in March 2017 in the report of the Secretary-General on statistical capacity-building (E/CN.3/2017/30). The report of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (E/CN.3/2018/4) provides information about the overarching efforts for statistical capacity-building for monitoring the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in countries, such as activities related to the implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data and the organization of the second United Nations World Data Forum, to be held in October 2018. The report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (E/CN.3/2018/2) provides information about its working groups, including the working group on statistical data and metadata exchange, which is developing a data structure definition and metadata structure definition for the Sustainable Development Goal indicators to facilitate data and metadata exchange and reporting.

## V. Work programme of the inter-agency working group on the global Sustainable Development Goals review

18. Many international agencies and organizations contributed data and analysis to the Sustainable Development Goals progress reports and to the indicators database and metadata repository. In order to provide a working mechanism for the United Nations system to prepare the report, as mandated by the General Assembly in resolution 70/1, the Statistics Division has convened several teleconferences with the agencies that provide data and analysis for the preparation of the annual Sustainable Development Goals progress reports and the global database. It has been proposed that face-to-face meetings also be convened on a regular basis (at least once a year) to allow for an easier exchange and more in-depth technical discussion. The first face-to-face meeting was held on 1 and 2 March 2017, and the second is planned for the first quarter of 2018.

19. This inter-agency working group carries out the following activities:

(a) Reviews and discusses plans for the production of the annual progress report of the Secretary-General and the complementary, user-friendly annual Sustainable Development Goals report;

(b) Agrees on the structure, scope and coverage of the yearly reports and related contributions by the relevant organizations;

(c) Contributes to the regular update of the global indicators database, including by providing updates and refinements to the metadata, as needed;

(d) Exchanges information and updates on the capacity-development activities related to statistics and indicators for the 2030 Agenda;

(e) Reports annually to the Statistical Commission.

## VI. Research exercise on a federated information system for the Sustainable Development Goals

20. In March 2017, a research exercise on a federated information system for the Sustainable Development Goals was launched by the Statistics Division, in partnership with Esri,[10] with the aim of exploring the feasibility of establishing a modern platform for collaboration among producers and users of statistical and geospatial data and information across national and global statistical systems. The exercise is based on the common vision of implementing the 2030 Agenda through effective access to and use of integrated statistical, geospatial and other sources of data, supported by technologies that facilitate interoperability, data sharing, visualization and dissemination, and collaboration across various data producers. Ireland, Mexico, the Philippines, Qatar, Senegal and South Africa participated in the initial phase of the exercise, and additional countries joined in October 2017.

21. The aim of the exercise is to pilot a federated system of national and global data hubs that enhance the capabilities of national statistical offices for data analysis, collaboration, communication and user engagement, leveraging geographic information systems as an integration framework. In particular, the implementation of country-led platforms that facilitate the integration of different data sources and collaboration among partners from different stakeholder groups, including donors and providers of geospatial and statistical information systems, is being explored to address Sustainable Development Goal reporting needs at all levels.

22. The concept of the project, together with applications in some of the countries that are part of the exercise, will be presented at a seminar before the forty-ninth session of the Statistical Commission, and a brief informal document summarizing the outcome of the discussion will be presented to the Commission, under agenda item 3 (a) "Items for discussion and decision: data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". Based on the results obtained so far, the Statistics Division, in consultation with Member States that have already developed a national application and private sector partners and donors, is also developing a detailed proposal to implement a federated information system for the Sustainable Development Goals, including possible governance and financing mechanisms.

## VII. Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training

23. The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals have generated demand from countries for statistical capacity-building, including training on areas related to the production and utilization of data and statistics for the monitoring of the Agenda. The Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data identifies statistical capacity-building as an essential action area for achieving the scope and intent of the 2030 Agenda and provides a framework for its planning and implementation. Extensive methodological work is in progress to meet the data requirements for new topics, and there is increased attention on administrative and non-traditional data sources. Such new sources and methods are likely to generate even greater demands for training from countries over the next few years.

24. There has been a long-felt need to harmonize the training offerings of various institutions and maximize their outreach to ensure that they are delivered in a more efficient and cost-effective manner. The sharing of training calendars, course materials and best practices by such institutions across regions is considered a good

[10] Esri is an international supplier of geographic information system software and web geographic information system and geodatabase management applications.

approach to maximize outreach and avoid duplication of efforts. Harmonization of the statistical courses and curricula and their compliance with internationally adopted statistical standards are crucial for enhancing the production of high-quality and comparable statistics in countries. The supply of training must be commensurate with the priorities and needs of countries. A recent online survey on training needs clearly showed a high demand for training in official statistics as well as in statistics from new and non-traditional sources.

25. In that context, the Statistics Division held a consultation with a wide range of stakeholders on the establishment of a network of international and regional institutions working on statistical capacity-building. At a meeting on statistical training held in Beijing from 13 to 15 September 2017, representatives of international and regional institutions engaged in statistical training and national statistical offices from several countries had overwhelmingly supported the establishment of a network to be known as the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training and proposed a road map towards its establishment and activities that the network would carry out in the next two years.

26. The network is currently being established, and several international and regional organizations have been invited to join as founding members, including the Statistics Division, which will function as the secretariat of the network. Statistical training institutions in member countries that offer courses to countries in their region or subregion will be invited to join the network in due course on the basis of specific criteria. An advisory group or other mechanism will ensure the representation of different stakeholders and will include national statistical offices with adequate regional representation.

27. It is proposed that a two-year workplan be developed by the founding member institutions and reviewed by the advisory group once the network has been established. The following are possible activities that may be carried out by the network:

(a) Sharing of the training curricula, calendars and materials offered by member institutions;

(b) In-depth assessment of training needs in countries, including in relation to the production, dissemination and use of data for the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) Detailed mapping of courses offered by the various global and regional institutions;

(d) Mapping of training gaps, keeping in view the typology and core skill sets required;

(e) Establishment of work streams for the development of harmonized and standardized training curricula on a few selected topics (both traditional and new), which are modular in nature and in line with international concepts and guidelines;

(f) Finalization of globally recommended curricula on at least five key topics (by the end of the second year).

28. The goals, objectives, strategic action areas and governance and management of the network are presented in the annex to the present report. Detailed terms of reference for the network will be submitted to the Commission in a background document.

# VIII. Conclusions

29. **The Commission is requested to:**

(a) **Take note of the present report presenting the Statistics Division's work to prepare the annual reports on the Sustainable Development Goals and update the global indicators database, its technical assistance activities in support of the indicator framework and its cooperation with the inter-agency working group on the global Sustainable Development Goals review;**

(b) **Express its views on the recommendations and guidelines for the basic requisites of national data platforms for follow-up and reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals, as detailed in the background document;**

(c) **Express its views on the research exercise on the piloting of a federated system of national and global data hubs;**

(d) **Express its views on the establishment of the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training and the tentative governance and management arrangement, and comment on the proposed two-year workplan for the network.**

# Annex

## Goals, objectives, possible strategic action areas and tentative governance and management arrangements of the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training

### Goal

1. The goal of the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training is to build sustainable capacities in countries through the efficient, effective and harmonized delivery of training at the global and regional levels that will enable the production and use of high-quality data and statistics, including in the monitoring and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

### Objective

2. The overall objective of the network is to facilitate collaboration among its members in the delivery of training on statistics in a more harmonized and standardized manner and to improve the effectiveness of such training by maximizing its outreach.

### Strategic actions areas

3. Once established, the network will carry out the following activities:

(a) Conduct a preliminary assessment to redefine country needs in the light of the new demands arising from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals;

(b) Assess training gaps with regard to the training needs of countries to systematically address them;

(c) Systematically share training courses, calendars and materials through a web-based platform;

(d) Harmonize statistical training courses and curricula in line with international guidelines and standards on concepts and methods;

(e) Build the capacities of existing statistical training centres to deliver training on official statistics based on harmonized and standardized training curricula;

(f) Promote training that enables data producers to improve data literacy and usage within stakeholder communities;

(g) Develop and nurture pools of trainers in all regions on different statistical areas and maintain a roster of experts that can be used by countries as and when required;

(h) Foster a global discussion on certification;

(i) Leverage capacity for the increased use of distance learning.

### Governance and management

4. The network will be established with a few founding members selected in consultation with key international and regional statistical institutions and will later be expanded to include other members on the basis of specific criteria. The group of founding members is expected to be responsible for managing the operations of the network on a regular basis. One of the founding member institutions will be nominated by consensus to serve as the Chair, which is expected to be rotated every

two years. The Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat will serve as the secretariat of the network.

5. An advisory group or other mechanism with representatives of selected national statistical offices and other data stakeholders will provide guidance on various matters, including the implementation of programme activities.

6. The group of founding members and the advisory group will work mainly through the exchange of emails and hold meetings at an agreed interval through teleconferencing or other electronic means. Physical meetings can be held on the sidelines of major meetings. The group of founding members will meet once a year in the margins of the annual session of the Statistical Commission.

7. The network will regularly report on the progress of its activities to the Statistical Commission.

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# Report of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

## Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2017/228 and past practices, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The report provides a summary of the activities of the High-level Group since the forty-eighth session of the Statistical Commission. It highlights the outcomes of the Group's ninth meeting, held on 7 and 8 November 2017. It describes the ongoing work related to the implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data and the work on statistical capacity needs by the joint subgroup of the High-level Group and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators. It also provides an update on the preparations for the second United Nations World Data Forum, to be held from 22 to 24 October 2018 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and explores the issues around the possible creation of the position of Chief Statistician of the United Nations.

Points for discussion by the Commission include: (a) approving the proposed revision to the terms of reference of the joint subgroup; (b) reviewing and expressing its views on the idea of creating the position of Chief Statistician of the United Nations; (c) expressing its views on the mechanism for contributions by the Commission to the high-level political forum on sustainable development; and (d) expressing its views on and approving the proposed work plan of the High-level Group for 2018.

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# Report of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

## I. Introduction

1. The High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was established at the forty-sixth session of the Statistical Commission. It is composed of representatives from 22 national statistical offices and operates under the auspices of the Statistical Commission. In its decision 46/101,[1] the Commission tasked the High-level Group with providing strategic leadership for the implementation process relating to the Sustainable Development Goals as it concerns statistical monitoring and reporting and fostering statistical capacity-building, partnership and coordination.

## II. Membership

2. Based on the terms of reference of the High-level Group, in the third quarter of 2017, there was a rotation of members of both the High-level Group and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, coordinated through the respective regional mechanisms in each region. In line with the terms of reference and practices of the High-level Group, members are expected to represent the countries in their own subregion. In order to facilitate this representation, States that are members of the High-level Group should have regular consultations on the work of the Group with their neighbouring countries.

3. Through the 2017 rotation, the following nine new members were newly included in the High-level Group: Angola and Senegal, nominated by the Statistical Commission for Africa; Iraq and Morocco, nominated by the Statistical Committee of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; Myanmar and Sri Lanka, nominated by the Committee on Statistics of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; and Costa Rica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname, nominated by the Statistical Conference of the Americas. There were no changes in the representation proposed by the Conference of European Statisticians or by the Conference of the Americas for the subregion of South America. See annex I for the current full membership of the High-level Group.

4. At the ninth meeting of the High-level Group, the Director of Statistics of the Haut-Commissariat au Plan in Morocco, Belkacem Abdous, was elected Co-Chair of the Group, joining the Chief Statistician of Hungary, Gabriella Vukovich. Mr. Abdous serves in the High-level Group as a representative from the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia region.

## III. Ninth meeting of the High-level Group, 7 and 8 November 2017, Ramallah, State of Palestine

5. The ninth meeting of the High-level Group was hosted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics in Ramallah on 7 and 8 November 2017. The main topics on the

[1] See E/2015/24-E/CN.3/2015/40.

agenda were the implementation guide for the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data, capacity development, including immediate needs for statistical capacity-building, and preparations for the second United Nations World Data Forum and the High-level Group's involvement therein. The Group also discussed some aspects of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/313 in relation to the Cape Town Global Action Plan, in which the Assembly stressed the need for the Statistical Commission to inform the discussions at the high-level political forum on statistical gaps and capacity-building needs in relation to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the need for countries, the United Nations and all other entities to intensify support for statistical capacity-building. In addition, the High-level Group further reviewed and discussed issues around the possible creation of the position of Chief Statistician of the United Nations and issues related to open data.

## IV. Notes on the implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan

6. Between July and October 2017, a subgroup of the High-level Group (Denmark, Ecuador, Hungary, Mongolia and State of Palestine, as well as the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21), as an invited issue partner) developed an outline of the notes on the implementation for the Cape Town Global Action Plan (see annex II). The notes on the implementation are based on national practices related to the six strategic areas of the Cape Town Global Action Plan. It is the intention of the subgroup to collect experiences and cases from other countries not represented in the High-level Group through an open consultation. The High-level Group determined that the implementation of the plan should also be reviewed at the United Nations World Data Forum in 2018, emphasizing the need for implementation to take place at the country level.

## V. Joint subgroup of the High-level Group and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group

### A. Background

7. At its forty-seventh session, the Statistical Commission endorsed the proposal to establish a joint subgroup of the High-level Group and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group, tasked with developing a plan to address the immediate priorities, including statistical capacity-building and the financial framework for the implementation of the global indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals.

8. The joint subgroup held a meeting on the margins of the forty-eighth session of the Statistical Commission to discuss regional work undertaken on determining capacity-building needs, a paper on criteria for capacity-building and a workplan. It was decided that the work of the joint subgroup should be more directly linked to the Cape Town Global Action Plan.

### B. Joint questionnaire on capacity development and immediate needs

9. In accordance with its terms of reference, the joint subgroup has been working toward identifying recommendations on priority areas towards which to target

funding for statistical capacity-building and advocate for resource mobilization, management and monitoring. At the ninth meeting of the High-level Group, a draft paper, which more closely links capacity-building needs to sustainable development and the Cape Town Global Action Plan, and aims to identify national priorities, was presented by the joint subgroup. It included a proposal on a questionnaire aimed at identifying immediate needs and areas where national statistical capacity needs to be strengthened.

10. The Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century also presented plans to the High-level Group for a survey on capacity development. It was agreed that there should be only one survey and that the joint subgroup would work with the Partnership to develop a joint questionnaire on capacity development and the immediate needs for statistical capacity-building.

11. After inputs from the High-level Group were incorporated into the questionnaire, the survey was rolled out to national statistical offices in December 2017. The initial results will be analysed in January 2018 and transmitted to the Commission in a background document.

## C. Financial framework

12. As stated in the joint subgroup's terms of reference, the subgroup was also tasked with developing a plan to address the financial framework for the implementation of the global indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals. At its ninth meeting, the joint subgroup presented suggestions related to financing for capacity-building. Many of the actions set out in the Cape Town Global Action Plan will require additional funding. Developing countries, and in particular the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, will require additional contributions and technical support for capacity development. The High-level Group agreed that it is important to address the funding needs related to the implementation of the Global Action Plan so as to ensure that its implementation is as successful as possible.

13. The High-level Group supported framing the fund profile in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Group could potentially play an advisory role or provide high-level steering. The Group could also focus on identifying areas that are underfunded and those where multiple initiatives are taking place, in order to recommend a more efficient utilization of resources.

14. The High-level Group agreed that the joint subgroup, in consultation with the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, would explore possible different solutions for a financing mechanism to address the capacity-building needs relating to the implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan and the national needs and develop a position paper. The paper will be submitted to the Commission in a background document.

## D. Updated mandate of the joint subgroup

15. At the ninth meeting of the High-level Group, it was agreed that the mandate of the joint subgroup would be updated. The High-level Group agreed that the joint subgroup will work on achieving a better understanding of a possible mechanism for financing for the implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan, and develop

a position paper. See annex III for the proposed revised terms of reference of the joint subgroup for discussion and approval by the Commission.

# VI. United Nations World Data Forum, 2018

## A. Preparation for the second Forum

16. The second United Nations World Data Forum will take place from 22 to 24 October 2018 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. A Programme Committee was formed in July 2017, consisting of 23 members, including the two Co-Chairs of the High-level Group and a third member of the Group, the State of Palestine. The list of Programme Committee members for the second United Nations World Data Forum can be found on the Forum's website.[2]

17. The Programme Committee has elaborated on the six original thematic areas[3] used to guide the development of the programme.

18. In order to ensure a wide range of inputs from all key stakeholders, the secretariat issued an open call for session proposals, which was developed by the Programme Committee on 1 November 2017 through an electronic platform for submission available on the website of the Forum. The call is open until 31 January 2018. In addition, a separate call for posters and individual interventions and one for contributions to the exhibition will be issued in the coming months.

19. The Programme Committee and the secretariat are also developing a set of selection criteria to assess the session proposals and to guide the decision process. Throughout the process, the Programme Committee or the High-level Group may request revisions to some proposals. All applicants will be informed about the status of their applications by 31 March 2018. The proposed programme will be reviewed by the High-level Group.

## B. Process for decisions on the host country for the third United Nations World Data Forum

20. The third United Nations World Data Forum will take place in the fourth quarter of 2020. The High-level Group agreed that there would be a rotation among the regions for the hosting of the Forum. The timeline for expressing interest and submitting bids to host the third United Nations World Data Forum is as follows:

(a) The call for expressions of interest will be sent to the Permanent Missions to the United Nations in New York by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs in January 2018, with a deadline for reply of 31 March 2018;

(b) Detailed bids to host the third Forum are to be submitted and received by 31 August 2018;

(c) The decision will be taken by the High-level Group on 21 October 2018, on the margins of the second Forum.

[2] See https://undataforum.org.

[3] See https://undataforum.org/WorldDataForum/programme/.

## VII. Chief Statistician of the United Nations

21. At the forty-eighth session of the Statistical Commission, in its decision 48/117,[4] the Commission took note of the recommendation of the Office of Internal Oversight Services that it explore the possibility of designating a senior official as Chief Statistician of the United Nations to coordinate statistical matters across United Nations entities. The Commission also agreed that this topic should be discussed further by the High-level Group.

22. Based on the recommendation of the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the decision of Commission, the High-level Group agreed, at its ninth meeting, to review the arrangements concerning chief statisticians in other agencies and entities and to explore possible options for the creation of the position of Chief Statistician of the United Nations. At the same meeting, the Group also decided to establish a subgroup to examine the issues surrounding the creation of the position of Chief Statistician. The following members are part of the subgroup: Switzerland (as lead), Argentina, Italy, Suriname and the State of Palestine.

23. A paper by the High-level Group on the creation of the position of Chief Statistician is transmitted to the Commission in a background document.

## VIII. Strengthening the link between the Statistical Commission and the high-level political forum

24. At its ninth meeting, the High-level Group reviewed some of the elements contained in General Assembly resolution 71/313, including the need for the Statistical Commission to inform the discussions at the high-level political forum on sustainable development regarding statistical gaps and capacity-building needs related to the Sustainable Development Goals.

25. At the high-level political forum, every year in July, Member States come together to discuss the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Through the voluntary national reviews, Member States report on the follow-up to and review of the Agenda. During the forum in 2016 and 2017, there was minimal involvement of the Statistical Commission and statisticians in the official programme of the forum, with only one brief session including a panel of statisticians featured in the programme of the forum for both years. The High-level Group agreed that it was essential that the national statistical offices and the global statistical community be represented more extensively in the official programme of the forum. To that end, the Group recommends that the programme for the forum should include one or more sessions fully dedicated to data and statistics and to the needs for capacity-building.

## IX. Workplan for 2018

26. At its ninth meeting, in November 2017, the High-level Group agreed upon a workplan for 2018, which is contained in annex IV.

[4] See E/2017/24-E/CN.3/2017/35.

## X. Points for decision

27. **The Statistical Commission is invited to:**

(a) **Approve the proposed revision to the terms of reference of the joint subgroup, as contained in annex III;**

(b) **Review and express its views on the idea of creating the position of Chief Statistician of the United Nations;**

(c) **Express its views on the mechanism for contributions by the Commission to the high-level political forum on sustainable development;**

(d) **Express its views on and approve the proposed workplan of the High-level Group for 2018.**

# Annex I

## Current membership of the High-level Group

The following countries are members of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as of November 2017:

Statistical Commission for Africa: Angola, Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa
Statistical Committee of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia: Iraq, Morocco and State of Palestine
Committee on Statistics, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific: Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Vanuatu
Statistical Conference of the Americas: Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname
Conference of European Statisticians: Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Switzerland and the United States of America
Chair of Statistical Commission:[1] Brazil

[1] The Chair of the Statistical Commission is an ex officio member of the High-level Group.

# Annex II

## Notes on the implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data

**Draft outline** (as at 27 June 2017)

I. Introduction

- A. Background on the High-level Group and Cape Town Global Action Plan
- B. Setting the stage
  - 1. Purpose
  - 2. Resolution
  - 3. Audience (players/responsible entities)

II. Interlinkages across different strategic areas of the Cape Town Global Action Plan

III. Implementation and coordination of capacity-building activities

- A. Implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan at different levels
  - 1. Global
  - 2. Regional
  - 3. Subregional
  - 4. National
  - 5. Subnational
- B. Coordination across the levels
- C. Coherence and consistency across multilateral and bilateral activities
- D. Financing: key principles of the financing of capacity development
  - 1. Resource mobilization both within the global community to carry out the Cape Town Global Action Plan and with a focus on domestic funding
  - 2. Domestic funding (including advocacy activities and policy dialogue)
  - 3. Advocacy

IV. Implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan

(with reference to countries in vulnerable situations)

1. Strategic area 1: coordination and strategic leadership on data for sustainable development
   - (a) Best practices and good examples of implementation and coordination
   - (b) Challenges faced in the implementation
2. Strategic area 2: innovation and modernization of national statistical systems

(a) Best practices and good examples of implementation and coordination

(b) Challenges faced in the implementation

3. Strategic area 3: strengthening of basic statistical activities and programmes, with particular focus on addressing the monitoring needs for the 2030 Agenda

(a) Best practices and good examples of implementation and coordination

(b) Challenges faced in the implementation

4. Strategic area 4: dissemination and use of sustainable development data

(a) Best practices and good examples of implementation and coordination

(b) Challenges faced in the implementation

5. Strategic area 5: multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development data

(a) Best practices and good examples of implementation and coordination

(b) Challenges faced in the implementation

6. Strategic area 6: mobilize resources and coordinate efforts for statistical capacity-building

(a) Best practices and good examples of implementation and coordination

(b) Challenges faced in the implementation

# Annex III

## Terms of reference for the joint subgroup of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators

### 1. Background

At its forty-seventh session, the Statistical Commission endorsed the proposal to establish a joint subgroup of the High-level Group and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group. The joint subgroup was tasked with developing a plan to address the immediate priorities, including statistical capacity-building and a financial framework for the implementation of the global indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals. The creation of the joint subgroup emerged from discussions on the need for a more coordinated effort by both the High-level Group and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group to ensure that appropriate actions are taken to support national statistical systems in the implementation of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals.

### 2. Objective

The joint subgroup will continue to be the venue for linking the work of the High-level Group and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group. In particular, it will plan for a process for the High-level Group to obtain from the Inter-Agency and Expert Group, in an efficient manner, information on the development of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators and the gaps in data availability to inform the decisions and actions of the High-level Group in the most efficient possible way.

The national statistical systems have a pivotal role in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators. Their role as the gatekeeper of data traffic flows needs to be strengthened and reinforced through the recommendations of the joint subgroup. The recommendations of the subgroup are advisory, aiming at ensuring harmonization between the work of the High-level Group and Inter-Agency and Expert Group.

The Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data, adopted by the Statistical Commission at its forty-eighth session in March 2017, provides a framework for the design and implementation of country-led statistical capacity-building activities that are necessary for achieving the 2030 Agenda. The work of the joint subgroup is expected to contribute to the notes on implementation that are being developed by the High-level Group.

### 3. Membership

The joint subgroup will be composed of five members from the High-level Group and five members from the Inter-Agency and Expert Group, taking into account the appropriate regional representation and including the Co-Chairs of each group.

The membership was decided as follows:

Inter-Agency and Expert Group: Canada, Colombia and Egypt; Co-Chairs, Mexico and the United Republic of Tanzania

High-level Group: Denmark, Italy and the State of Palestine; Co-Chairs, Hungary and Morocco.

## 4. Organization of work

The joint subgroup will report to the High-level Group and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group. The joint subgroup is a country-led undertaking mandated by the Statistical Commission.

The joint subgroup will conduct its activities through electronic means. When possible, and in connection with other meetings or global events, the joint subgroup could meet to further discuss progress made and new issues that emerge during the year.

The outputs of the work of the joint subgroup, including the identification of top priorities and results and recommendations, will be summarized and circulated to the High-level Group and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group. Both groups will then share the recommendations on their respective websites.

The Statistics Division will act as secretariat of the joint subgroup.

## 5. Time frame

As the work on the identification of the immediate priorities for statistical capacity-building and the development of the financial framework in the context of the implementation of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and the Cape Town Global Action Plan is ongoing, the joint subgroup will continue its workplan for two years, until the fifty-first session of the Statistical Commission.

## Annex IV

# Proposed workplan of the High-level Group for 2018

1. Meetings

   Tenth meeting, 4 March 2018 (prior to the forty-ninth session of the Statistical Commission)

   (a) Review the implementation guide

   (b) Follow-up on the joint subgroup

   (c) Update on the progress of preparations for the second United Nations World Data Forum

   Eleventh meeting, May-June 2018 (Morocco, tbc)

   (a) 2-day meeting with a comprehensive agenda, including the implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan

   (b) Review of the document on the financing and implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan

   (c) Review of the discussions on creating a position of Chief Statistician of the United Nations

   (d) Outcome document of the High-level Group (or broader stakeholders' engagement) to be presented at the second United Nations World Data Forum

   Twelfth meeting, 21 and 25 October 2018 (on the margins of the second United Nations World Data Forum, Dubai)

   (a) 21 October: final review of countries' bids for hosting the third Forum and decision on the host country for the third United Nations World Data Forum, in 2020

   (b) 25 October: key partners of the Programme Committee to participate in the initial assessment of the second Forum and discussion on lessons learned

2. Further activities on the Cape Town Global Action Plan

   (a) Finalize the implementation guide

   (b) Joint subgroup and Statistics Division development of notes and guidance on capacity-building and financing aspects

3. United Nations World Data Forum: 22–24 October 2018, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

4. Other events

   (a) March 2018: Side events of the forty-ninth session of the Statistical Commission

   (b) March 2018: forty-ninth session of the Statistical Commission

   (c) July 2018: high-level political forum on sustainable development

(d) September 2018: General Assembly side event to provide an update on the implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan and the notes on implementation